



HSP XX - Corporate Homeworking Policy (Health Safety and Wellbeing)

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AUTHOR	Sandrine Rivoal Pluviaux and Justin Tyas
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1. Introduction

During the COVID-19 crisis, emergency homeworking has been used to support the public health strategy. The City Corporation enacted emergency arrangements to support staff in sometimes challenging homeworking environments. However, homeworking is not a new concept, it is an extremely popular form of flexible working that many departments, services and teams have been offering which often has benefit for both business and employees.

This policy is concerned specifically with homeworking which is a type of flexible working that may require a City Corporation employee to work almost entirely at home, occasionally at home, or splitting their time between their home and their usual workplace.

It is recognised that many employees already work occasionally from home e.g. preparing material, assessing work, carrying out research etc. The objective of this policy is not to undermine existing work practices or impose unnecessary restrictions. Rather, the objectives are:

- to ensure the health safety and wellbeing of all employees.
- to provide all employees with the equality of opportunity to work from home where this is possible

For the purpose of this policy, the term homeworking applies equally to remote and mobile working.

To enable the City Corporation to maximise its employee's effectiveness and productivity but at the same time giving more flexibility in their working lives, the City of London Corporation is committed to supporting homeworking where there is also demonstrable business need.

The City Corporation, in support of homeworking, will provide the equipment and tools to reap the benefits of adopting flexible working practices that meet the needs of the organisation, the team and the individual. This will maximise our ability to provide the highest quality of service whilst at the same time managing our operating costs.

The City Corporation will ensure that all employees who work from home or remotely are aware of the acceptable use of portable computer devices and remote working opportunities. Portable computing devices such as laptops are provided to assist employees to conduct their work efficiently and effectively. This equipment and any information stored on it should be recognized as valuable organisational information assets and safeguarded appropriately.

The City Corporation is committed to its duty to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Where reasonable adjustments are already made at an employee display screen workstation, such as ergonomic and/or personalised equipment, that same help, support and protection shall be afforded to homeworkers.

This policy should not be used to accommodate caring responsibilities. The City Corporation has developed a number of other work/life balance policies to enable employees to undertake caring responsibilities for dependants where required.

2. Policy statement

The Home and Remote Working scheme is in place to assist in achieving a work-life balance as part of the [City Corporation's Flexible Working Policy](#).

The City Corporation has developed a range of flexible working practices to enable more effective working in a variety of ways from a variety of work settings. The City Corporation has, for a number of years, operated working from home on a limited basis to accommodate specific individual or service needs. These flexible working practices should be used in conjunction with this policy.

The benefits of home and remote working can include:

- employee retention,
- increased productivity and
- reduced costs of accommodation and other overheads.

Not all work is suited to this sort of scheme so availability will be based on the:

- suitability of the employment and person to homeworking
- demonstrable benefits and measurable outcomes for the organisation needs
- the position involved
- the proposed workplace i.e. a suitable home working environment

Homeworking is a form of flexible working that can in certain circumstances bring benefits both to an employee and to the City Corporation. However, the success of homeworking depends on whether all three elements (i.e the job, the person and the home) are suited to this type of working practice.

The needs of the City Corporation services will always be the paramount consideration.

The success of the scheme will depend on trust, reasonableness and co-operation between managers and employees. Home and remote working are both to be treated in exactly the same way as if the employee was working in the office.

Home and remote workers will be treated no less favourably than any other member of staff, with regard to City Corporation policies and procedures or terms and conditions.

3. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish the standards, working practices and supported configurations of home and remote working solutions.

At the City Corporation we are committed to adopting modern flexible working practises where appropriate to do so.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all City Corporation employees (not contractors), but not the City of London Police who have their arrangements. This policy does not apply to Members of the City Corporation.

Occasionally, it can be agreed for staff to work from specific locations other than their home on a 'major' or 'minor' homework basis. If this is agreed, the provisions of this policy apply it is their responsibility to ensure that the location is safe and enables confidential working practices.

5. Definitions

Home workers are defined as employees who, in whole or in part, are based at home for the purpose of carrying out their work with the agreement of the City Corporation and are designated as 'home workers'.

Working from home may be on an occasional, a temporary or a permanent basis and all contractual obligations, including core working hours, continue to apply. Further details can be found in the [Corporate guidance on Home / remote working safely](#).

Home and remote working consist of working based at home rather than at the normal place of work and may involve using IT systems to perform work and to remain in contact with managers and employee. It is carried out to an agreed work pattern on a, permanent, regular, part-time, temporary or ad hoc basis.

Not all jobs are suitable for home and remote working, however any job may be considered on its own merits. Jobs that involve project work or an identifiable output, or those that provide services within the community may particularly lend themselves to this type of work. Jobs that will not usually be suitable are those provide a direct service to the public at a fixed location that, e.g. staff on reception.

Managers must ensure that home and remote working arrangements do not have an adverse effect on any particular group of employees neither should a refusal to agree homeworking disadvantage any particular group.

6. Interaction with other policies and guidance

The City Corporation has developed a range of flexible working practices to enable more effective working in a variety of ways from a variety of work settings.

This Policy supports and is aligned with other City Corporation policies and guidance which offer further guidance in relation to health and safety, including but not limited to:

- HR Policies including Flexible Working Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Corporate Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- [Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\) Policy](#)
- [Display Screen Equipment Guidance](#) including [Home working guidance](#)
- Lone working guidance
- Acceptable Use of IT

These documents should be used in conjunction with this policy.

7. The Legal Position

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASWA) places a duty on employers to ensure the health safety and welfare of their employees as far as reasonably practicable. This duty applies whenever the employee is at work regardless of whether they are working on the City of London Corporation's premises, other locations or in their own home. HASWA also places a duty on employees to take care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their work activity. Again, this applies regardless of where the employee is working, so the employee would have to consider the safety of other family members etc.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to carry out a risk assessment of the work activities carried out by the home worker, with the aim of identifying hazards (factors that could cause harm) arising from the work activity and deciding whether sufficient steps have been taken to prevent harm to the employee or anyone else who may be affected by the work activity.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment - DSE) Regulations 1992 (as amended) apply to workers who use DSE daily, for an hour or more at a time. In law, employers must:

- Undertake a DSE assessment
- reduce risks, including making sure workers take a break from DSE work or do something different
- provide an eye test if employees ask for one
- provide training and information

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Responsibility of Chief Officers, Head Teachers Directors, and other Senior Officers

Chief Officers, Head Teachers, Directors, and other Senior Officers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that health and safety issues reported to them, as senior line managers, are addressed at the appropriate level and in a timely manner.
- Ensuring the developing a departmental network of DSE assessors
- Ensuring that the policy is benefiting the City Corporation's business
- Overseeing the consistent implementation of the policy
- Recommending improvements to the policy

Local arrangements will be in place for our independent schools

8.2 Responsibility of Managers

Managers will ensure that their staff:

- Unless in an emergency capacity, understand the specific hours and measurable outcomes are agreed before the arrangement starts. This is in order to ensure that employees complete the task in hand and do not exceed the Working Time Regulations
- Complete home working / agile DSE assessments at an appropriate frequency and ensure that staff have access to the appropriate technology to work effectively both in the office environment and from home

- Have access to appropriate training and support to work effectively in the new ways
- Take responsibility for creating a safe working environment when working from home
- Have access to appropriate support equipment to assist in the creation of a safe working environment when working from home
- Have SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely) objectives, priorities and targets which can be measured in line with the Performance Reviews, as well as clarity about the outcomes expected of their job role
- Have their individual circumstances and requirements (particularly where an employee has a disability) taken into account, including the needs of newly appointed staff, trainees and apprentices who may initially need to come into the office more often for support rather than working at home
- Have access to continuous performance review process which includes regular 1:1 conversation and/or supervision. This will include ensuring staff are not isolated, and that regular supervision and team meeting arrangements are in place.
- Ensure that information governance and health and safety requirements are adhered to at all times
- Have documented and mutually agreed arrangements for homeworking

Homeworkers are covered by health and safety law in the same way as any other employed worker. Any equipment used for the purpose of the work at home could be judged to fall within the scope of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

This means that all the equipment must be:

- safe for the user
- in an adequate state of repair
- not cause a hazard to others who may be affected by it.

As such Managers must ensure that all equipment provided is carefully selected and regularly maintained. Likewise, the homeworker is responsible for their electricity supply, sockets and the equipment that they own and may be used as part of their work.

8.3 Responsibility of Homeworking employees:

Employees must:

- Agree working arrangements with their manager (and in consultation with other team members where appropriate)
- Ensure that their manager knows when and where they are working at all times
- Attend appropriate training and meetings at management's request
- Co-operate with the risk assessment process (including home working/agile DSE assessments), report any problems, carry out regular checks of equipment and the workplace and report faults to the manager without delay;
- Report any accidents which occur during the agreed work hours
- Report any health problems which may be attributed to, or aggravated by, their working arrangements.
- Take care of City Corporation equipment such as laptops, particularly when travelling or working from home. Any loss, damage or theft must be reported to the manager and the police if appropriate.
- Comply with the IT security and data protection requirements
- Complete the Data Protection Act training modules
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and follow the DSE Guidance and other health and safety arrangements and procedures

8.4 Responsibility of Human Resources

Human Resources is responsible for:

- Providing advice and guidance to managers and employees on how to effectively deal with home working at departmental or individual level.
- Assisting managers with the fair and consistent application of the guidelines.

8.5 Responsibility of the Corporate Health Safety and Wellbeing Team

The Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager is responsible for:

- Providing guidance on risk assessments
- Implementing a system for DSE and Agile working awareness training for all DSE users and home workers
- Promoting wellbeing for homeworkers via corporate mechanisms

8.6 Responsibility of Information Technology

The Information and Technology (IT) Team are responsible for:

- Providing guidance on technical solutions to assist remote working
- Providing IT support to staff that are working from home.

8.7 Responsibility of Occupational Health Service

The Occupational Health Department is responsible for:

- Offering specialist advice and support to home and remote workers, managers on risk reduction of DSE
- Advising on individual cases where health problems related to DSE usage have been reported

9. Providing advice and supporting staff on mental health Particular considerations

9.1 Health and safety

Each member of staff working from home is responsible for the condition of their home-working environment. The environment must be conducive to such work and all of the necessary equipment should be fit for purpose.

Setting up the workstation correctly (including desk/table, chair, and the PC or laptop) is equally important when working away from the workplace and the same principles apply.

Therefore, homeworkers must complete the online agile / home working workstation training courses and self-assessment. For further information please read the [Corporate Guidance on Home and Remote working Safely](#) and visit the intranet page on Display Screen Equipment guidance.

9.2 Equipment and Supplies

The City Corporation will provide the equipment needed to carry out the work. This may include City Corporation computer and IT devices, DSE furniture (chair, desk. Etc.)

Use of City Corporation IT equipment (computers, laptops, mobiles etc) must be in accordance with the [City Corporation's IT Policies](#).

Equipment provided by the City Corporation must not be used for means other than homeworking, or it may be viewed as a benefit in kind and the individual may be liable to tax.

Employees must notify any faults with equipment to their manager as soon as possible who will make appropriate arrangements for repair or replacement. If the fault relates to computer equipment, then they should notify the IT helpdesk in the first instance.

The City Corporation is responsible for maintaining equipment supplied to a homeworker and will ensure electronic and other equipment is safe and functioning properly, subject to reasonable notice being given.

9.3 Learning & Development

Working from home is a very different way of working, which requires the employee to adapt quickly to working independently and on their own for most of their working day. There will be less support from colleagues and daily contact with their line manager (although regular communication is essential).

Recommended learning and development include:

Induction - It is good practice for new employees to spend some time in the office environment to familiarise themselves with the organisation and with colleagues before working from home. The manager will arrange for the home worker to spend a suitable period in the office during their induction period.

IT - before an employee commences formal homeworking, it is essential for them to attend a briefing session with a member of the IT department to ensure that they are equipped to maintain all telecoms, computers, and home office equipment. Please contact the IT helpdesk

Health and Safety Awareness - As a minimum, home workers must have attended health and safety training on homeworking which will include DSE set-up. Before agreeing to homeworking, managers should consider what further training may be necessary.

Other training requirements may include:

- Appropriate IT skills
- Communications and time management skills
- Cultural change and contact with others
- Personal development for employees working at home
- First aid, fire safety and accident reporting
- Managing stress
- Information security awareness
- Lone working

9.4 Wellbeing

It is important to be practical, flexible and sensitive to each other's situation when working from home or remotely. To support home and remote workers City Corporation we pledge to:

- Support flexibility for personal needs - to help balance work and personal commitments in the home, it is ok to block time in your diary to manage family and care responsibilities. Just make sure it is discussed with the line manager
- Be connected - by taking a break to virtually touch base and socialise with colleagues, just as we do when we are in the workplace. Managers should ensure that employees are in regular contact with colleagues. Home workers should attend

team meetings in a face-to-face capacity. Managers should contact their employee, via email and telephone regularly

- Be supportive – Line managers should make sure they have provisions in place in order to support home and remote workers who feel isolated and need assistance. Employees are also able to use the Employee Assistance Programme or visit Occupational Health service. Further assistance and guidance on wellbeing and mental health are accessible on intranet.

Equally it is a homeworker's responsibility to inform their manager if they are off sick and they should follow the City Corporation's sickness absence procedure.

9.5 Security and Confidentiality

It is City Corporation policy that computer users are not permitted to load non-standard applications and other software on the City Corporation's PCs or laptops. Home/remote workers should not download any application or software without specific advance permission.

In all instances, repairs and servicing to City Corporation-owned equipment will only take place by persons authorised by the City Corporation to do so.

Remote/home workers must ensure the security and safekeeping of any confidential information provided by the City Corporation for use in the remote working environment. Such information should not be accessible to family or visitors of the remote/home worker. Employees must ensure that all reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with the City Corporation's requirements.

If the employee discovers or suspects that there has been an incident involving the security of information relating to the City Corporation, clients, customers or anyone working with or for the City Corporation, they must report it immediately to their line manager.

9.6 Insurance

Equipment supplied by the City Corporation to those working from home is covered under the City Corporation insurance scheme against theft, fire and damage. All equipment must be kept in a secure place when not in use. At all times, the Employee's home must be locked when left unoccupied. Failure to do so may render the insurance invalid. If the employee's actions render any insurance invalid, the City Corporation may seek to recover any losses associated with an employee's breach from the employee personally.

Employees will be required to inform their Home and Contents Insurer that additional IT equipment has been provided and that they are working from home. City Corporation will not be responsible for use of personal work equipment.

The City Corporation will not be responsible, in any circumstances, for any additional premiums requested by the Employee's Insurer as a result of the equipment loaned to the remote/home worker.

9.7 Property and Tax

Employees are responsible for ensuring home/remote working does not breach any of the terms of their mortgage, rental agreement or any other agreement governing their residence.

9.8 Costs/Expenses and Travel

No contribution will be made by the City Corporation towards normal household expenses attached to home working, such as heating, lighting or council tax costs. When an employee is working at or from home, journeys made to the normal office base will not be reimbursed.

10. Monitoring & Review

The Health Safety and Wellbeing Team has lead responsibility for reviewing this policy and reporting to the Corporate Health Safety and Wellbeing and other committees as required.

This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis at no more a than three yearly intervals.

Revisions

Version	Page/ Para No	Description of change	Date Approved

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